Amendments to the Claims

The listing of claims below will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

1. (Currently Amended) A system for receiving and forwarding e-mail messages for a subscriber, the system comprising:

a server configured to be coupled to a network; and

an agent resident and operable on the server, the agent configured to compare a first characteristic of the e-mail messages, received for the subscriber, to specific message characteristics provided by the subscriber and pre-stored on the server, to generate a message ID for an e-mail message that has a characteristic match, to send an alert message to the subscriber when the characteristic match is found, and to execute instructions for forwarding the e-mail message that has the characteristic match, wherein the first characteristic is ~~other than message sender information, message subject line information, and message time information,~~ located in the e-mail messages in at least one of bodies of the e-mail messages and attachments of the e-mail messages, the alert message includes the message ID, and the instructions are associated with the message ID and are received from the subscriber in response to the alert message.

2. (Previously Presented) A system as in claim 1 wherein the agent is further configured to send the alert message to a mobile device configured to be carried by the subscriber.

3. (Previously Presented) A system as in claim 1 further comprising a human interface configured to allow an operator to cause the e-mail message that has the characteristic match to be forwarded to an e-mail address provided by the subscriber responding to the alert message by conversing with the operator via telephone.

4. (Previously Presented) A system as in claim 1 further comprising a telephone menu system configured to allow the subscriber, responding to the alert message, to perform one or more of the following actions: log in, identify the e-mail message that has the characteristic match, select from recorded options, and input information for forwarding the e-mail message that has the characteristic match.

5. (Currently Amended) An e-mail server comprising:

an e-mail system configured to receive and to forward e-mail messages; and

an agent configured to compare a first characteristic of e-mail messages, received for a subscriber, to specific message characteristics provided by the subscriber and pre-stored on the e-mail server, to generate a message ID for an e-mail message that has a characteristic match, to send an alert message to the subscriber when the characteristic match is found, and to execute instructions for forwarding the e-mail message that has the characteristic match, wherein the first characteristic is ~~other than message sender information, message subject line information, and message time information,~~ located in the e-mail messages in at least one of bodies of the e-mail messages and attachments of the e-mail messages, the alert message includes the message ID, and the instructions are associated with the message ID and are received from the subscriber in response to the alert message.

6-8. (Canceled)

9.   (Currently Amended)   A method for receiving, filtering, and routing e-mail messages,

comprising:

прerecording, on a mail server, characteristics for the e-mail messages to be routed,

the characteristics provided by a subscriber;

receiving, at the mail server, an e-mail message addressed to the subscriber;

comparing a first characteristic of the received e-mail message to the prerecorded

characteristics provided by the subscriber, the first characteristic being ~~other than message~~

~~sender information, message subject line information, and message time information;~~ located

in the e-mail message in at least one of a body of the e-mail message and an attachment of the

e-mail message;

identifying and storing, on the mail server, the received e-mail message if a

characteristic match is found with one of the prerecorded characteristics;

generating a message ID for the received e-mail message if the characteristic match is

found with the one of the prerecorded characteristics;

sending an alert message to the subscriber when the characteristic match is found, the

alert message including the message ID;

receiving instructions for forwarding the e-mail message that has the characteristic

match, the instructions being the associated with the message ID and being received from the

subscriber in response to the alert message; and

forwarding the e-mail message that has the characteristic match to a destination according to the instructions provided in response to the alert message.

10-12. (Canceled)

13. (Currently Amended) An agent for processing e-mail messages, comprising:

a stored list of message characteristics provided by a subscriber;

a receiver configured to receive an e-mail message and to ascertain a first message characteristic of the received e-mail message, the first message characteristic being ~~other than~~ ~~message sender information, message subject line information, and message time~~ ~~information;~~ located in the e-mail message in at least one of a body of the e-mail message and an attachment of the e-mail message;

a comparator configured to compare the first message characteristics of the received e-mail messages with the stored list of message characteristics, to tag the e-mail message if there is a characteristic match, and to generate a message ID for the e-mail message if there is the characteristic match;

an alert mechanism configured to send an alert message to the subscriber to receipt of the e-mail message having the characteristic match, the alert message including the message ID; and

a save facility configured to store the e-mail message having the characteristic match for future distribution instructions, the future distribution instructions associated with the message ID and received from the subscriber in response to the alert message.

14. (Canceled)

15. (Canceled)

16. (Previously Presented) The agent of claim 13 further comprising a forwarding facility configured to retrieve and to forward the e-mail message having the characteristic match from the save facility to a destination provided by the subscriber in response to the alert message.

17. (Previously Presented) The agent of claim 16 wherein the forwarding facility comprises a human interface configured to perform one or more of the following: identify the e-mail message having the characteristic match to be retrieved, retrieve the identified e-mail message, and forward the identified e-mail message to the destination provided to an operator by the subscriber.

18. (Previously Presented) The agent of claim 16 wherein the forwarding facility comprises an automated telephone menu system configured to provide choices to the subscriber connecting to the forwarding facility by telephone to allow the subscriber calling in to identify the e-mail message to be forwarded, and the agent is configured to retrieve and forward the identified e-mail message to the destination provided by the subscriber calling in response to the alert message.

19. (Currently Amended) A method comprising:

receiving a message for a subscriber;

comparing a characteristic of the message to a first ~~criteria,~~ criterion, the ~~first criteria~~ ~~other than message sender information, message subject line information, and message time~~ ~~information;~~ characteristic being located in a body of the message;

if the ~~message~~ characteristic matches the first ~~criteria,~~ criterion, then generating a message ID and sending an alert including the message ID to the subscriber;

receiving a reply from the subscriber in response to the alert, the reply comprising instructions associated with the message ID; and

processing the message according to the instructions.

20. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 19 wherein the message is an e-mail message.

21. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 19 wherein the alert is a notification message that identifies the received message and the first ~~criteria~~ criterion matching the message.

22. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 19 wherein the comparing ~~step~~ comprises filtering the message to determine if parts of the message meet the first ~~criteria.~~ criterion.

23. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 19 ~~wherein the first criteria are one or more~~ ~~of the following: message subject line information, message body information, and message~~ ~~attachment information,~~ wherein the comparing ~~step~~ further comprises comparing the

message to a second ~~criteria,~~ criterion, the second ~~criteria~~ criterion being message sender information, and wherein the generating the message ID and the sending ~~step~~ the alert including the message ID to the subscriber further ~~comprises~~ comprise if the ~~message~~ characteristic matches the second ~~criteria,~~ criterion, then generating the message ID and sending the alert including the message ID to the subscriber.

24.   (Previously Presented)   The method of claim 19 wherein the alert comprises at least a portion of the message.

25.   (Previously Presented)   The method of claim 19 wherein the alert is a message sent to a pager.

26.   (Previously Presented)   The method of claim 19 wherein the alert is a message sent to a phone.

27.   (Previously Presented)   The method of claim 19 wherein the instructions comprise a command to forward the message to a new destination.

28.   (Previously Presented)   The method of claim 27 wherein the new destination is one or more of the following:

         an e-mail address;

         a fax number;

         a telephone number;

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a mobile device;

a hand-held computer;

a notebook computer;

a server computer; and

an Internet Service Provider.

29. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 19 wherein the reply is received via one or more of the following entities:

an operator;

a voice-response system;

a telephone call;

an auto attendant; and

a mobile device.

30. (Currently Amended) A system as in claim 1 ~~wherein the first characteristic is at least one of message body information and message attachment information, and~~ wherein the agent is further configured to compare a second characteristic of the e-mail ~~messages~~ messages, received for the ~~subscriber~~ subscriber, to the specific message characteristics provided by the subscriber and pre-stored on the server, the second characteristic being located in the e-mail messages in at least one of message subject line information ~~of the e-mail messages~~ and message sender ~~information.~~ information of the e-mail messages.

31. (Currently Amended) An e-mail server as in claim 5 ~~wherein the first characteristic is at least one of message body information and message attachment information, and~~ wherein the agent is further configured to compare a second characteristic of the e-mail ~~messages~~ messages, received for the ~~subscriber~~ subscriber, to the specific message characteristics provided by the subscriber and pre-stored on the server, the second characteristic being located in the e-mail messages in at least one of message subject line information ~~of the e-mail messages~~ and message sender ~~information.~~ information of the e-mail messages.

32. (Currently Amended) A method as in claim 9, ~~wherein the first characteristic is at least one of message body information and message attachment information, and~~ further comprising comparing a second characteristic of the received e-mail message to the prerecorded characteristics provided by the subscriber, the second characteristic being located in the e-mail message in at least one of message subject line information ~~of the e-mail message~~ and message sender ~~information.~~ information of the e-mail message.

33. (Currently Amended) A agent as in claim 13 ~~wherein the first message characteristic is at least one of message body information and message attachment information, and~~ wherein the receiver is further configured to ascertain a second message characteristic of the received e-mail message, the second message characteristic being located in the e-mail message in at least one of message subject line information of the e-mail message and message sender ~~information.~~ information of the e-mail message.

34. (New) A system, comprising:

a server; and

an agent associated with the server, the agent configured,

to generate a message ID when a body or an attachment of an e-mail message includes a predetermined characteristic,

to send an alert message including the message ID to a subscriber, and

to execute an instruction for forwarding the e-mail message to the subscriber upon authentication of the subscriber.

35. (New) The system of claim 34, wherein the agent is configured to reside on the server and to operate on the server.

36. (New) The system of claim 34, wherein the agent is configured to determine if a content of the body or the attachment of the e-mail message includes the predetermined characteristic.

37. (New) The system of claim 36, wherein the predetermined characteristic is stored on the server and the agent is configured to compare the predetermined characteristic with the content of the body or the attachment of the e-mail message to determine if the content of the body or the attachment of the e-mail message includes the predetermined characteristic.

38. (New) The system of claim 34, wherein the agent is further configured to receive, from the subscriber, the instruction for forwarding the e-mail message.

39. (New) A method, comprising:

generating a message ID when a body or an attachment of an e-mail message received from a network includes a characteristic that correlates to a criterion;

sending via the network the message ID to a subscriber; and

receiving an instruction from the subscriber that is used to process the e-mail message.

40. (New) The method of claim 39, further comprising:

processing the e-mail message in accordance with the instruction.

41. (New) The method of claim 40, wherein the processing comprises forwarding the e-mail message via the network to the subscriber.

42. (New) The method of claim 39, further comprising:

determining if a content of the body or the attachment of the e-mail message includes the characteristic.

43. (New) The method of claim 42, wherein the determining comprises comparing the content of the body or the attachment of the e-mail message with the criterion.